

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 A-01 H-03 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00
/027 W

-----060316 200134Z /70-42

O 190940Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY SANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5715
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE (ECJ4) IMMEDIATE
CHUSMTM DHAHRAN IMMEDIATE
USMTM RIYADH IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 SANA 4066

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR DISTRIBUTION CHANGE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OREP (SIKES, ROBERT AND FLYNT, JOHN), MASS, YE, SA, US
SUBJ: ARMS FOR YEMEN

REF: (A) SANA 4054 (DTG 161430Z AUG 78), (B) STATE 208508
(DTG 162325Z AUG 78)

BEGIN SUMMARY: YAR PRESIDENT ALI ABDALLAH SALIH HAS
ASKED TO MEET CODEL SIKES AND FLYNT. REQUEST INSTRUCTIONS
AS TO WHAT I MIGHT SAY. END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING MEETING ON AUGUST 16 WITH SAUDI REPRESENTA-
TIVE ALI MUSALLIM (SEE SANA 4054) CHARGE RECEIVED
ANOTHER MUSALLIM REQUEST FOR MEETING ON THURSDAY, AUGUST
17. MEETING OCCURRED 2 IN AFTERNOON, WITH MUSALLIM
BARELY AWAKE. MEETING OCCURRED BEFORE CHARGE SAW STATE 208508.

2. MUSALLIM CALLED ME TO DISCUSS YET ANOTHER MEETING
HE HAD HAD WITH PRESIDENT. PRESIDENT CLAIMS THAT YEMENI
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POSITION HAS BEEN MISUNDERSTOOD BY U.S. AND MUSALLIM
SAID U.S. POSITION CLEARLY HAD NOT BEEN UNDERSTOOD BY
PRESIDENT. MUSALLIM SAID UPSHOT OF HIS MEETING IS
CONCLUSION THAT U.S. SHOULD NOT CONSIDER YEMENI ACTION
IN MEETING WITH CATHEY AND KABANI AS "REJECTION" AND,
ON OTHER HAND, MUSALLIM HAD TOLD YEMENIS THAT AMERICAN
REACTION TO LONG EQUIPMENT LIST WAS ALSO NOT RPT NOT

REJECTION. I COMMENTED THAT FOR U.S. SIDE THIS WAS TRUE, IN MY VIEW. IN ACCEPTING LIST FROM YEMENIS AT END OF KABANI--CATHEY MEETING I SAID WE WOULD "CONSIDER IT" AND IN SUBSEQUENT TALK WITH PRIME MINISTER I REPEATED WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER REQUESTS FOR LONG TERM SUBJECT TO ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY, DANGERS OF ESCALATION, POLITICAL CONDITIONS, ETC. I TOLD MUSALLIM, AGAIN, THAT U.S. DESIRED TO REOPEN TALKS WITH YEMENIS AND TO BEGIN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE WITH EXPANDED PROGRAM OF ARMS COOPERATION, PARTICULARLY WITH FIRST STEP AS PROPOSED BY CATHEY AND KABANI.

3. I THEN SUGGESTED THAT IF YAR ALSO WANTS TO REOPEN DISCUSSIONS, VISIT OF CONGRESSMEN SIKES AND FLYNT POSED GOOD OPPORTUNITY. I OUTLINED THEIR INTEREST IN DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE CONCERNS AND, IN LINE WITH EARLIER WASHINGTON TELEGRAM ABOUT APPOINTMENTS FOR CODEL WITH CHIEF OF STATE, IF POSSIBLE, I SUGGESTED THAT MUSALLIM POINT OUT TO PRESIDENT SALIH THAT THIS WOULD BE IDEAL TIME TO OUTLINE -- AS REASONABLY AS POSSIBLE -- YEMENI PERCEPTION OF THREAT FROM SOUTH AND NEEDS OF YAR TO MEET THIS THREAT. I FURTHER SUGGESTED THAT THIS WOULD BE PERFECT TIME FOR SALIH TO ACCEPT SOME OR ALL PARTS OF IMPACT PACKAGE AS WAY OF GETTING THINGS GOING. IF SALIH WISHED TO CLAIM THAT PRESENT IMPASSE RESULT OF MISUNDERSTANDING THEN I PREPARED TO IGNORE THE SECRET

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RECORD, WHICH PRETTY CLEAR, AND LOOK TO FUTURE RATHER THAN TO PAST. POINT WAS TO BREAK OUT OF PRESENT IMPASSE.

4. MUSALLIM WAS ENTHUSIASTIC AND NOTED THAT WITH PRIME MINISTER ABD AL-AZIZ ABD AL-GHANI DUE IN WASHINGTON IN ANOTHER WEEK IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO CONTINUE DISCUSSIONS, AT LEAST OF POLITICAL FRAMEWORK, WITH VERY HIGH LEVEL IN AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AS FOLLOWUP TO SIKES--FLYNT TALKS HERE. SIGNIFICANTLY, HOWEVER, MUSALLIM DEMURRED AT IDEA OF SUGGESTING TO SALIH THAT SIKES--FLYNT TALKS WOULD BE GOOD TIME TO ACCEPT IMPACT PACKAGE. HE SEEMED TO THINK OF IT AS GOOD WAY TO GET U.S.--YEMENI CONTACTS STARTED AGAIN AND CONVEY TO YEMENI LEADERSHIP CONCERN AND INTEREST OF SOME CONGRESSIONAL MEMBERS OF U.S. GOVERNMENT.

5. HAD I SEEN STATE 208508 BEFORE MEETING WITH MUSALLIM I MIGHT NOT HAVE SUGGESTED SIKES--FLYNT MEETING WITH SALIH IN LINE WITH PARA 3 INSTRUCTIONS TO "AVOID RAISING ARMS QUESTION WITH YARG." HOWEVER, WITH MUSALLIM TAKING LEAD IN MATTER AND SIKES AND FLYNT SIMPLY LISTENING, I DECIDED INITIATIVE COULD BE

USEFUL. WE WILL GET CLEARER IDEA OF ANY CHANGE IN
SALIH'S THINKING SINCE DISAPPOINTING BREAKDOWN OF TALKS
ONE WEEK AGO.

6. MUSALLIM VISITED ME THIS MORNING, 19 AUGUST AT
2:00 IN MORNING, THIS TIME WITH ME BARELY AWAKE, TO
CONVEY THAT PRESIDENT ACCEPTED IDEA OF MEETING WITH SIKES AND
FLYNT.

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR DISTRIBUTION CHANGE

7. IT IS PERFECTLY POSSIBLE FOR ME TO ATTEND INTERVIEW
WITH CONGRESSMEN AND SAY NOTHING. IN THIS AND ALL
OTHER MATTERS I WILL OF COURSE CARRY OUT WHATEVER INSTRUCTIONS
I HAVE. HOWEVER, TWO OBSERVATIONS MAY BE RELEVANT.
FIRST, HOWEVER MUCH WE WANT TO WORK OUT WITH SAUDIS
BEST TACTICS IN DEALING WITH YEMENIS, WE MUST REMEMBER
THAT PROGRAM HAS TO BE EXPLAINED HERE AND CONFIDENCE
MAINTAINED HERE. INSTRUCTIONS TO ME TO SAY LITTLE OR
NOTHING EXCEPT THAT USG "CAREFULLY CONSIDERING YAR'S
REACTION TO OUR PROPOSAL AND IS IN CONSULTATION WITH
SAG ON WHERE TO GO FROM HERE" IS LIKELY TO UNDERCUT
ANY EFFORT WE WISH TO CONVEY TO YAR THAT "U.S. POLITICAL
SUPPORT FOR YAR IS REAL AND MEANINGFUL." BELIEVE WE
MUST CONTINUE TO TELL YEMENIS THAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR WAYS
TO HAVE "IMMEDIATE IMPACT IN MANIFESTING THIS POLITICAL
SUPPORT" AND THAT OUR "LONG TERM OBJECTIVE IS TO BUILD

APPROPRIATE AND EFFECTIVE DEFENSE CAPABILITY IN YEMEN."
WE WILL NEVER SUCCEED IN CONVEYING SUCH IMPRESSIONS
IN YEMEN IF I AM INSTRUCTED TO SAY AT ANY POINT THAT
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"U.S. NOT PREPARED AT THIS TIME TO CONSIDER YEMENI LIST
AS FORMAL REQUEST FOR EQUIPMENT" WHICH WE DO NOT WANT
TO RESPOND TO DIRECTLY.

8. WHATEVER NUANCES WE MAY WANT OUR POSITION TO HAVE,
WE MUST CONSIDER THAT INTENDED OBJECTS OF OUR POLITICAL
SUPPORT HERE ARE UNLIKELY TO UNDERSTAND, MUCH LESS
APPRECIATE THEM.

9. THIS IS PARTICULARLY TRUE IN VIEW OF INTENSE POLITICAL
AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURES UNDER WHICH YAR LEADER-
SHIP IS WORKING.

10. IN VIEW OF ALL OF THE ABOVE, BELIEVE DEPARTMENT
COULD AUTHORIZE ME TO DO SOMETHING MORE THAN LISTEN, IF
IN MEETING WITH SIKES AND FLYNT, PRESIDENT PRESENTS MORE
REASONABLE PICTURE AND SET OF DEMANDS THAN LAST WEEK.
WE CERTAINLY WANT TO BE IN A POSITION TO ENCOURAGE MORE
MODERATE VIEWS AND I WOULD LIKE TO THEREFORE BE FREE TO
CITE SOME SUB-ELEMENTS OF PARA 2 OF STATE 208508,
SPECIFICALLY SUBPARAGRAPH 2 (BEGINNING "--THAT U.S.
POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR YAR..."), SUBPARAGRAPH 3, AND
SUBPARAGRAPHS 7 AND 8. IF AUTHORIZED I WOULD CONCLUDE
BY SAYING WE ARE CONSIDERING LIST WHICH YAR HAS
SUBMITTED AND WILL LOOK FOR EARLY OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS
IT FULLY WITH YARG IN TERMS OF SOME SERIOUS U.S. POLICY
PROBLEMS OF APPROPRIATENESS QUANTITIES, COST EFFECTIVENESS,
AND ABILITY OF YAR DEFENSE FORCES TO EFFECTIVELY ABSORB
THEM. I COULD ALSO ASK HIM IF HE WOULD LIKE ANY
PART OR ALL OF PROPOSED AIRLIFT PACKAGE TO GO AHEAD.
I COULD TELL HIM WE INTEND SHARE, VERY SOON, OUR NEW
ASSESSMENTS OF THREAT.

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11. HAVE JUST SEEN STATE 209866, BUT STILL WOULD LIKE
INSTRUCTIONS.
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Message Attributes

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Secure: OPEN
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Subject: ARMS FOR YEMEN
TAGS: OREP, MASS, YE, SA, US, (SIKES, ROBERT), (FLYNT, JOHN)
To: STATE A
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